

[Jerdon (Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. (2) xiii. pp. 104, 105—1854) gives a similar account of the nests of the allied Indian ant, *Æ. smaragdina*, Fabr., and says that although they feed chiefly on vegetable secretions, they are sometimes employed to destroy a nest of wasps that may have established themselves in a house. He does not speak of their attacking bees.—W. F. K.]

PONERIDÆ.

ECTATOMMA DIMINUTA, *Smith*.

These marauding ants from Cairns, Queensland, appear to have no settled home, but roam about in masses, sometimes together and sometimes separating into small companies. They attack any insect they meet with, hunting their victims from under the bark of dead trees or out of crevices. Nothing comes amiss to them, and no insect appears to escape them.

CRYPTOCERIDÆ.

MERANOPLUS DIMIDIATUS, *Sm.*

These harvesting ants are found at Mackay, Queensland. They climb up grasses, and carry away the seed to their nests. The ground near the nest is generally strewn all over with the husks they have brought to the surface.

Ornithological Notes.

By THOMAS EDWARD GUNN, F.L.S.

[Read 15th January, 1885.]

Occurrence of the Blue-throated Warbler on the Norfolk Coast.—During the past four autumn seasons Mr. G. E. Power has been fortunate in procuring specimens of this hitherto rare British species at Cley on the Norfolk coast. In the second week of September last (1884), the Blue-throated Warbler apparently arrived in larger numbers than usual, so that Mr. Power had a chance of securing a good series for his collection; he having sent me a dozen examples to preserve, afforded me an opportunity of making a few observations, which I now append.

The relative lengths of the bills and tarsus in the above, with one exception, varied so slightly as to be scarcely perceptible,

| No. | Sex. | Total length. inch. | Extend. wings. inch. | Wing-carpus. inch. | Bill. inch. | Tail. inch. | Tarsus. inch. | Weight. |
|-----|------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---|
| 1. | ♂ | 6 $\frac{1}{3}$ | ... | 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ | 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ | ... | 1 | { 240 grs. or $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. apoth. wt. 255 grs. 220 grs. |
| 2. | ♂ | 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ | 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ | ... | 1 | |
| 3. | ♂ | 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 3 $\frac{3}{16}$ | 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ | |
| 4. | ♀ | 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ | ... | 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 1 | |
| 5. | ♀ | 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ | ... | 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ | ... | |
| 6. | ♂ | 6 $\frac{3}{5}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 3 | ... | ... | ... | |
| 7. | ♂ | 6 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 3 | ... | ... | ... | |
| 8. | ♂ | 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 3 | ... | ... | ... | |
| 9. | ♂ | 6 $\frac{1}{3}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 3 | ... | ... | ... | |
| 10. | ♀ | 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ | ... | ... | ... | |
| 11. | ♀ | 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 3 | ... | 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ | ... | |
| 12. | ♀ | 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ | ... | 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ | ... | |

those of the first five if anything having the advantage. Nos. 1 to 5 inclusive had blue throats, and were probably birds of the previous year, although not fully adult. Nos. 6 to 12 inclusive were evidently birds of the year, and showed no trace whatever of the blue throat. In nos. 1, 2, and 3, all males, the irides were dark brown; the head, back, and upper surface of wings clove-brown, the feathers of the crown had a darker centre, and those of its wings with pale outer edges; the streak over the eye of a dirty white, assuming a rufous tint from the eye to base of bill; the markings of the throat and neck varied considerably, a black line of feathers, either more or less broken, extended from the gape down each side of its neck, meeting a bar of blue that crossed the chest; below this a fine line of black, then a band of deep bay. The bar of blue in no. 1 was narrow and intermixed with black; space below ear-coverts dirty white, tinged with buff, and mixed with a few pale-blue feathers; the throat was white, with a narrow bar of bay just above the blue in one, a deeper bar in another, and in the third the throat all bay, excepting just under the chin, which was dirty white. The two females, nos. 4 and 5, had also blue bars across the chest, which were paler in hue, and broken up with some dark feathers, and were therefore not so sharp and distinct as in the males. In the 7 younger birds the chin and throat were white, the black feathers extending from each side of its neck and across the chest in form somewhat resembling a horseshoe. The tail-feathers, excepting the two centre ones, had the basal half of a bright bay, the rest dark clove-brown; under tail-coverts pale rufous; belly greyish white, with rufous tinge; flanks greyish brown; legs and toes brown.

In dissection I found the whole of their stomachs to contain,

either in more or less quantity, the remains of small Coleoptera; in that of no. 1 were as many as 7 individuals; the testes of this bird were very small, and of a dark-brown colour, nearly black. In the stomach of no. 10, in addition to the Coleoptera-remains, were two empty skins of a small lepidopterous larva.

Little Bittern in Hertfordshire.—This immature specimen of the Little Bittern (exhibited at the Meeting) was sent me on the 15th of October, 1884, by Mr. E. N. Benningfield, of Broxbourne Bridge, Herts, he having shot it himself two days previous in the Sea-marshes at Broxbourne. It was turned out of the sedges at the side of the river by his dog. On dissection it proved to be a female, the ovarium being small. The body was exceedingly fat, and in its stomach were the remains of aquatic insects, and the tail portions of two small fish, one of which I recognized as a perch; it also contained some bits of reed and vegetable fibres, these being, no doubt, accidentally swallowed with its prey. The following are the exact measurements that I took previous to skinning it:—

| | inches. |
|---|---------------------|
| Total length from tip of beak to end of tail | 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Tip to tip of fully extended wings | 22 |
| In the wing from carpal joint to tip of longest primary | 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| Bill along ridge of upper mandible | 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ |
| Tarsus | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| Tibia | 3 |
| Middle toe and claw | 2 |
| Outer toe and claw | 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ |
| Inner toe and claw | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| Hinder toe and claw | 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ |
| The inner edge of claw of middle toe is serrated. | |
| Tail | 2 |
| Weight (Avoirdupois) | 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. |

The second primary-feather in the wing was the longest, the first and third of equal length, and rather less than the second, the fourth and fifth and the remainder in succession each rather less than the preceding one. The irides of a pale straw-yellow, with a fine circle of paler tint around the black pupil. The ridge of its upper mandible was dark horn, the sides paler, merging into a greenish yellow from the nostril to the gape; under mandible of a pale horn, with a greenish-yellow tinge at gape; circle around the eye yellowish green; a stripe of pale brown in front of the eye divided the circle from the gape; tongue and mouth flesh-colour. Legs and toes yellow-green; under surface of toes and back of tarsus lemon-yellow. This description

of legs and toes does not at all agree with Yarrell (1 ed. vol. ii. p. 474); he says these parts are reddish brown, but he probably gave his description from a dried specimen. The only previous example of the Little Bittern I have ever received in the flesh or fresh state was also an immature female; this was killed on the Lower Abbey Marshes at Leiston in Suffolk, on the 25th of August, 1882. The measurements of this bird corresponded almost exactly with those given above. The weight, however, was 5 ounces, being $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce more; this can easily be accounted for by the contents of its stomach being of greater bulk; it consisted of aquatic insects, and two small pike, quite entire, each measuring $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length. The plumage of this bird was somewhat darker than the Suffolk specimen.

Hybrid between a Goldfinch and Bullfinch.—This interesting hybrid died at a Canary Show in Norwich, on the 4th of November last. It had been exhibited by Miss Howison of Cheltenham. It was bred early last season from a cock Goldfinch and hen Bullfinch, and was therefore not quite a year old. It weighed 4 drms. (apothecaries' weight); measured $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length from tip of beak to end of tail, $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches across fully-extended wings to tip of each, and $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in the wing from carpal joint to tip of longest primary; tail $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It showed certain characteristics of both parents, and was nearly the size of the Bullfinch, but somewhat slender in build, the back, wings, white rump, and tail resembling that bird; the tips of the secondaries in the wing were of a yellowish buff, instead of a slaty grey; the tips of the two long feathers of its upper tail-coverts were slaty grey, similar to those in the Goldfinch, and the outside feather of each side of its tail had a patch or blotch of white on the inner web; the Goldfinch had the two outer feathers similarly marked, the second feather having a much smaller patch or blotch; all the feathers in the tail of the Bullfinch were quite plain. The crown of its head was black, and the face of the Goldfinch was represented by the red being of a more delicate tint, which colour was suffused over its throat and chest, merging into a reddish-orange hue on the latter, also extending in a crescent-form from the lower part of its black crown to side of its throat; the ear-coverts were grey; abdomen and under tail-coverts white; flanks ash-grey; legs and toes pale horn. The beak was a modification of that of both parents, with a fine point to its upper mandible, extending $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch beyond the lower; colour pale horn, nearly black at tip.